

THE 8th BIG ISSUE OF-

BEST OF THE WEST

ME
BEST OF THE WEST

NO. 8

THE ORIGINAL INDIAN HERO OF RADIO FAME

STRAIGHT ARROW



TIM HOLT



CHARLES STARRETT as

THE DURANGO KID



GHOST RIDER

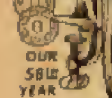




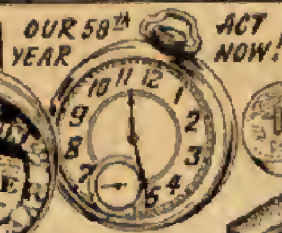
WEB COMIC
UNIVERSE.COM

THE SECRET OF TREASURE CAVE-
How Gray Shadow Tracked
Down the Mystery of
Spike's Sudden Wealth.

GIVEN! BOYS! GIRLS!
LADIES!
MEN!
WE GIVE YOU CASH OR PREMIUMS!



MAIL COUPON!
YOU GET
BIG
CATALOG



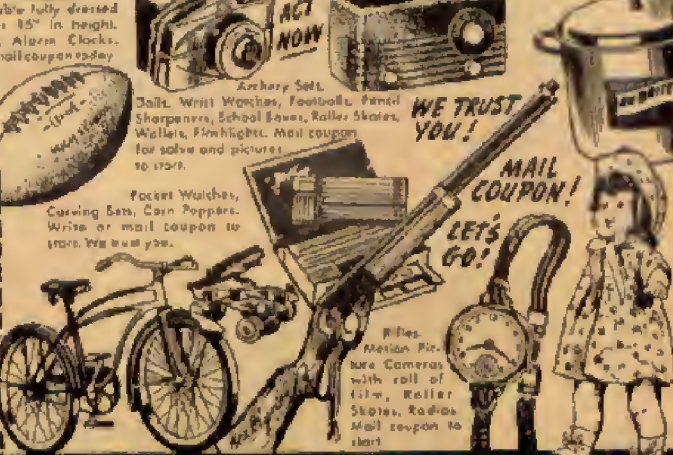
Can Poppers, Speedball, Cartoon Sets, Aluminum Ware, Blankets (sent postage paid), Mail coupon for salve and pictures to start.

LET'S GO!

Alarm Clocks, Pen and Pencil Sets, Bibles, Billboards, Telescopes, Roller Skates, Bionks, Aluminum Ware, Record Players, Movie Machines (sent postage paid). Rush coupon to start!

OUR 58th YEAR

MAIL NOW!



Willson Chem. Co. Dept. A-105 Tyrone, Pa. Date.....

Gentlemen: Please send me on trial 14 color art pictures with 14 boxes of White CLOVERINE Brand SALVE to sell at 25c a box (with picture). I will return amount asked within 30 days, select a Premium or keep Cash Commission as explained under Premium wanted in catalog sent with order, postage paid to start.

NAME..... AGE.....

ST..... R D..... BOX.....

TOWN..... ZONE PO..... STATE.....

PRINT NAME HERE

OUR 58th YEAR - WE ARE RELIABLE!

TIM HOLT

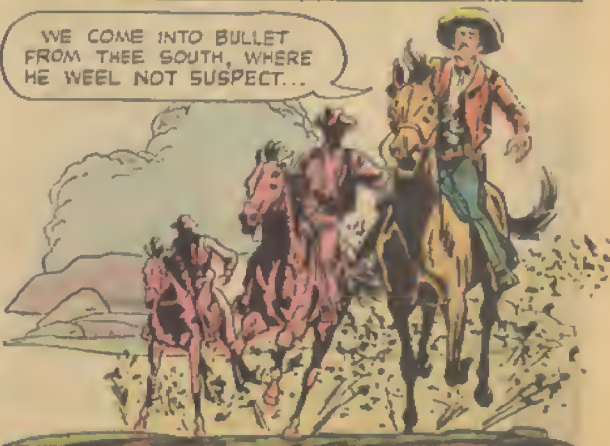
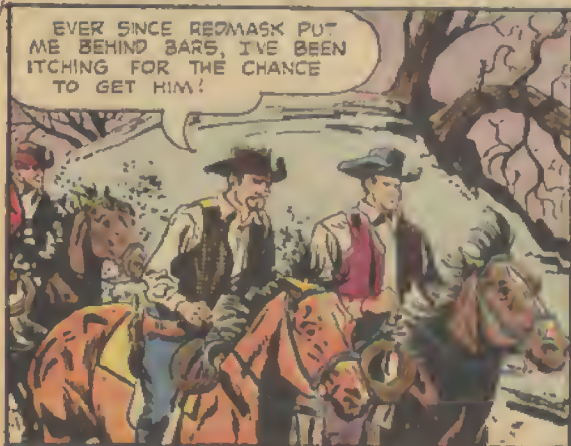
THEY COME FROM THE MILK RIVER COUNTRY OF MONTANA, FROM THE GOLD TOWNS OF NEVADA, FROM THE DESERTS OF ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO! OUTLAWS ALL, AND KILLERS—THIRSTING FOR ONE MAN'S DEATH! THAT MAN IS **REDMASK**, AND HE FINDS THAT HE MUST RIDE ALONE TO MEET THESE MEN, AND ACT AS—

**"BAIT FOR
BANDIT BULLETS!"**



BLACKJACK TRAVIS RIDES LIKE THE WIND, STOPPING NEITHER TO EAT OR TO DRINK...

ACROSS THE HOT DESERT SANDS COMES **EL SOMBRERO**.



THE SUNDANCE KID GALLOPS PAST RED BUTTES..

WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO OPERATE WHILE REDMASK IS ALIVE. SO— HE'S GOING TO DIE!



IN THE DUSTY STREETS OF BULLET WORD RUNS, LIKE THE WIND, OF THE COMING OF THE BAD-MEN...

REDMASK, GET MOVING! EL SOMBRERO AND BLACKJACK TRAVIS AND THE SUNDANCE KID ARE OUT FOR YOUR HIDE! THEY'RE COMING FROM SOUTH AND NORTH AND WEST!



I DON'T RUN FROM ANYONE! SHERIFF GAGE, GET UP A POSSE AND WE'LL MEET THEM COMING IN...

WELL, NOW, RED-MASK...

I-ER— GOT TO GO AFTER A BANK ROBBER!

I CAN'T EXPECT SHERIFF GAGE TO STOP HIS CRIME-FIGHTING TO HELP ME. I'LL ROUND UP SOME BOYS AT THE SALOONS...



BUT EVERYWHERE REDMASK GOES, THE ANSWER IS THE SAME...

SORRY, REDMASK! GOT MY CHORES TO DO!

I'M GOING FISHING.

I ADVISE YOU TO DO THE SAME, REDMASK!

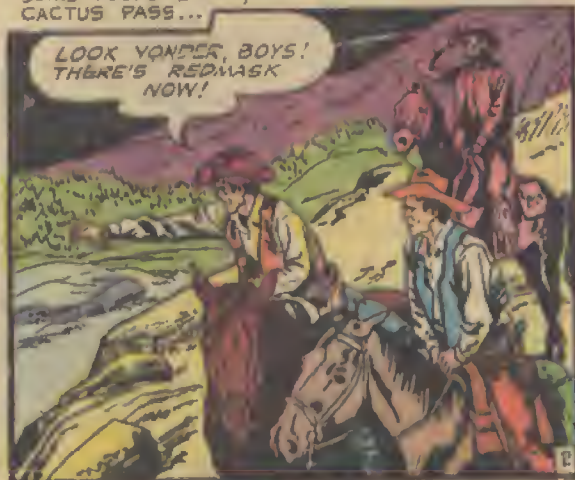


NONE OF YOU ARE STAYING TO GIVE ME A HAND! WELL, IN A WAY, I CAN'T BLAME THEM—THEY AREN'T IN DANGER. I'LL HAVE TO HANDLE THIS MYSELF— IF I CAN!



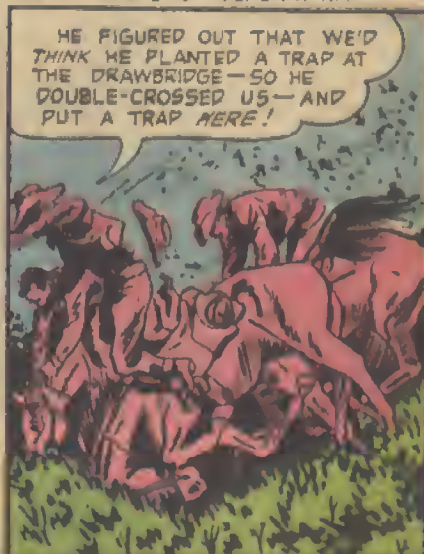
SOME HOURS LATER, IN THE FOOTHILLS AROUND CACTUS PASS...

LOOK YONDER, BOYS! THERE'S REDMASK NOW!

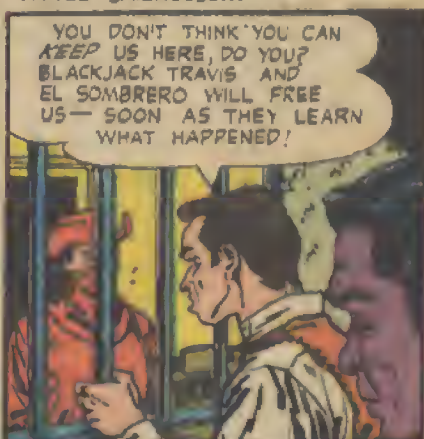




BUT AS THE SUNDANCE KID RACES OVER A SHRUB-GROWN TRAIL, THE EARTH OPENS UP BENEATH HIM—



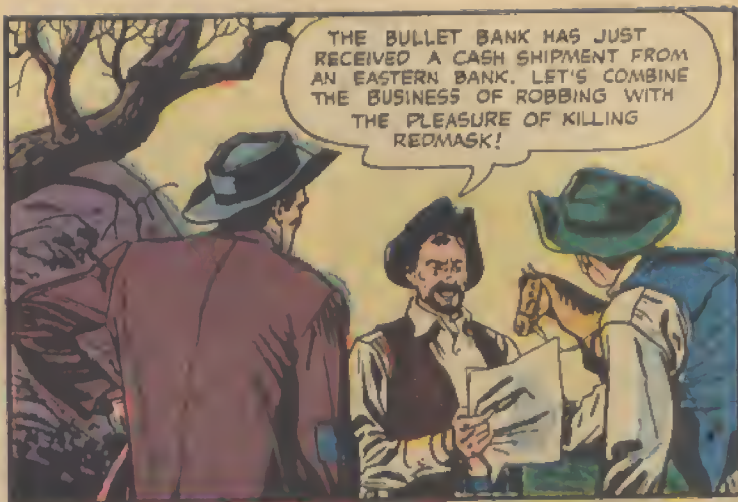
AN HOUR AFTERWARD, IN BULLET'S LITTLE JAILHOUSE...



HOURS LATER, AS REDMASK GALLOPS THROUGH THE FOOTHILLS OF THE RIPSAN RANGES, HE SCATTERS HANDBILLS...



NEXT MORNING, BLACKJACK TRAVIS
READS ONE OF THOSE PAPERS...



IN BULLET, AS THE SUN MOUNTS IN
THE SKY—



SUDDENLY, THICK PUFFS OF
YELLOW SMOKE POUR FROM
THE BANK'S FIREPLACE...



OUTSIDE THE BULLET BANK...



AS REDMASK PARADES HIS PRISONERS ALONG MAIN STREET—



HEY LOOK!
EL SOMBRERO—
AND HIS GANG!

GIVE US A
HAND WITH
REDMASK!



PLOP! PLOP! SPUTTT!



WE WEEL CATCH THEES
REDMASK AN' HANG HEEM
TO THE HIGHEST TREE
EEN BULLET!

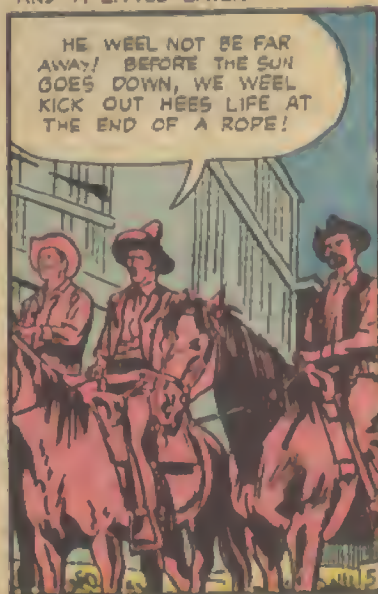


THEY'RE RIGHT
AT MY HEELS!



HE ESCAPED US!
BUT HE WEEL NOT
ESCAPE FOR LONG!
WE WEEL FREE
THEE SUNDANCE
KEED AND HEES
MEN, THEN WE
WEEL GO AFTER
HEEM!

AND A LITTLE LATER—!



HE WEEL NOT BE FAR
AWAY! BEFORE THE SUN
GOES DOWN, WE WEEL
KICK OUT HEES LIFE AT
THE END OF A ROPE!

OUTSIDE TOWN—



AND SO, AS REDMASK POUNDS ONTO THE DRAWBRIDGE—



THEN REDMASK'S HAND DROPS AND LIFTS. HIS COLT SIXGUN ROARS!



HA! HA! HA!
HE EES SO SCARED,
HE MISSES US
BY TWENTY FEET!
HA! HA!

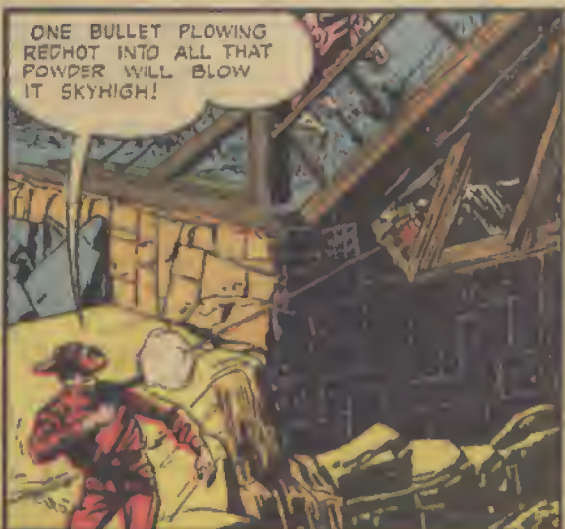
BUT REDMASK'S BULLET
STRIKES HOME—ON THE
CONTROL LEVER THAT
OPERATES THE DRAW-
BRIDGE!



WITH A SQUEAL OF GRATING CHAINS, THE BRIDGE
LIFTS UPWARD—



THE EXPLOSIVES
I PLACED UNDER
THE BRIDGE TO
TRAP THE SUNDANCE
KID WHEN HE FIRST
SIGHTED ME AS HE
RODE INTO BULLET
ARE STILL THERE!



ONE BULLET PLOWING
REDHOT INTO ALL THAT
POWDER WILL BLOW
IT SKYHIGH!



WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS AWAY...



THE END

FREE..10 HITLER STAMPS



10 Scarce Stamps—All Different—Sent Free

TO SECURE NAMES FOR OUR MAILING LIST

MAIL coupon at once. We'll send you this fascinating set of 10 Hitler stamps. Different sizes, colors, values. **NO COST TO YOU.**

These valuable stamps were issued by the short-lived nation of Bohemia-Moravia. They are much sought after. Now they are becoming **SCARCE**. And since the nation is no longer in existence—no new issues can be minted. Our supply is limited. So, don't ask for more than one set.

FREE 32-Page Book

In addition to the **FREE Hitler Stamps**, we'll also include other interesting offers for your inspection—**PLUS a FREE** copy of our helpful, informative book, "How To Collect Postage Stamps." It contains fascinating and true stories such as the one about the 1¢ stamp (which a schoolboy gladly sold for \$1.50) and which was later bought for **FORTY THOUSAND DOLLARS**.

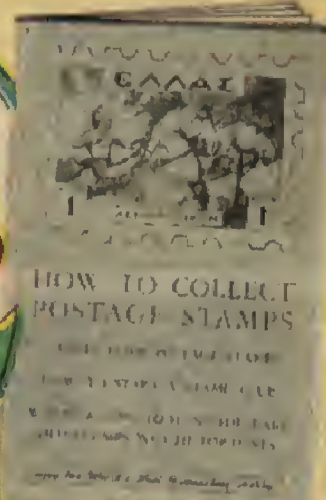
This Free Book also contains expert advice on collecting; shows how to get started; where and how to find rare stamps; how to tell their real value; how to mount them; trade them; how to start a stamp club; exciting stamp games, etc. It has pictures galore! Full pages of pictures showing odd stamps depicting native men and women from faraway lands; ferocious beasts, etc.

MAIL COUPON NOW

Be the first in your neighborhood to have this valuable set of Hitler Stamps. Your friends will envy you for it and want to buy the set from you. It will become one of the most prized sets of any stamp collection. But you must hurry if you want to get the 10 Hitler Stamps **FREE**. This special offer may have to be withdrawn soon. If coupon has already been used, write direct to: **Littleton Stamp Co., Dept. 4-MEC, Littleton, New Hampshire.** (Enclose 10¢ to help cover postage and handling).



**Supply Limited
Mail Coupon At Once!**



**LITTLETON STAMP CO.,
DEPT. 4-MEC LITTLETON, N. H.**

Send—**AT NO COST TO ME**—the valuable set of 10 Hitler stamps and the informative booklet, "How To Collect Postage Stamps." I enclose 10¢ to help cover postage and handling.

Name

Address

City State

STRAIGHT ARROW

THERE WERE ONLY THREE HOLES IN THE GROUND, YET EACH WAS FILLED WITH A DEATH WORSE THAN THE ONE NEXT TO IT! ALONE AGAINST THE EVIL FEATHER HAT AND HIS COMANCHE PEOPLE, STRAIGHT ARROW MUST DARE THOSE DEATHS IF HE HOPES TO WIN FREEDOM FOR THE COMANCHES! HOPEFULLY HE FACES THE DREAD MENACE OF —

"THE PITS OF PERIL!"



A CLOUD OF GLOOM HAS COME UPON THE COMANCHE NATION. AN EVIL CHIEFTAIN HAS MADE HIMSELF RULER —

ONLY IN MY DREAD PITS
WILL YOU LEARN I RULE
COMANCHERIA!



THERE ARE SOME TO WHOM FEATHER HAT BRINGS DEATH IN THE NIGHT, FOR THEIR POWER IS GREAT AMONG THE PEOPLE...

YOU ARE THE
BIG CHIEF! WITH
YOU GONE, I WILL
STAND ALONE
AMONG THE CHIEFS!





ONLY ONE WARRIOR—YOUNG **STRONG BOW**—DARES TO STAND AGAINST HIM...

WERE STRAIGHT ARROW HERE, YOU WOULD NOT TAKE CONTROL OF THE TRIBE!

SAH! NO MAN IS AS GREAT AS FEATHER HAT! THROW HIM IN HIS TEPEE!



TOMORROW, HE DIES AT DAWN, BY THE PIT DEATH!



MY ONLY WISH IS THAT STRAIGHT ARROW WERE HERE TOO—TO FACE THE PITS OF PERIL WITH YOU!



AS THE MOON RISES ABOVE THE PLAINS, TWO TERRIFIED GIRLS RACE FROM THE COMANCHE VILLAGE...

WE MUST FIND HELP SOMEWHERE!

IF WE DON'T, OUR BROTHER, STRONGBOW DIES AT DAWN!



NO USE RUNNING!

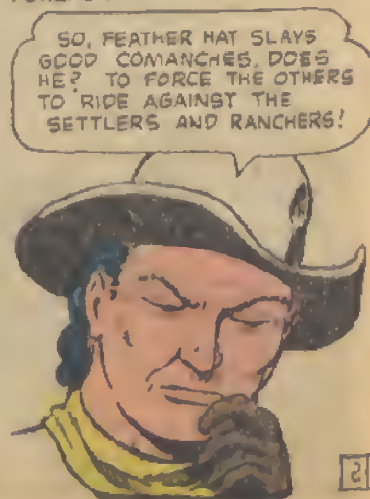
WE'RE CAUGHT!



YOU LOOK FRIGHTENED! HAS NOT STEVE ADAMS ALWAYS BEEN THE FRIEND OF LITTLE FAWN AND SOFT DEER?

OH, YES! WE THOUGHT YOU WERE FEATHER HAT!

AS THE COMANCHE GIRLS TELL THEIR STORY, A GRIM SCOWL GROWS ON STEVE ADAMS' FOREHEAD...



SO, FEATHER HAT SLAYS GOOD COMANCHES. DOES HE? TO FORCE THE OTHERS TO RIDE AGAINST THE SETTLERS AND RANCHERS!

TAKE THE GIRLS TO MESQUITE MOLLY, PACKY! I-ER- HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO!



MY RANCH KEEPS ME BUSY ROUNDING UP CATTLE AND TRAIL DRIVING THEM TO MARKET! I'VE BEEN GONE A LONG TIME FROM THE COMANCHE COUNCIL FIRES...



A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE BROKEN BOW RANCH LIES SUNDOWN VALLEY, AND IN IT THERE IS A VAST CAVE. ITS WALLS GLITTER WITH GOLDEN CRYSTALS, AND ON THEM HANGS A GOLDEN BOW, COMANCHE GARB AND WAR PAINT!



A MIGHTY GOLDEN PALOMINO STANDS WITHIN THE CAVE! A MOMENT AFTER STEVE ADAMS DOFFS THE CLOTHES OF STEVE ADAMS—HE APPEARS AS THE COMANCHE CHIEFTAIN, STRAIGHT ARROW!



AN HOUR BEFORE DAWN, IN A COMANCHE TEEPEE—

SO! FEATHER HAT FEARS TO FLING ME TO HIS PITS. HE COMES TO SLAY ME IN THE NIGHT!



IT IS NOT FEATHER HAT, BUT STRAIGHT ARROW! I COME TO TAKE YOUR PLACE! GIVE ME YOUR GARMENTS!

TO TAKE MY PLACE! BUT **YOU** WILL HAVE TO FACE THE PIT DEATHS, IF YOU DO THAT? WHY NOT FLEE WITH ME?



BECAUSE FEATHER HAT MUST BE PUNISHED. RIDE TO FORT COBB ON FURY! BRING THE CAVALRY, I STAY HERE TO DARE THE PITS IN ORDER TO KEEP FEATHER HAT IN CAMP WHILE HE WAITS FOR ME—**AS YOU!**—TO DIE! IF I CAN HOLD HIM LONG ENOUGH IT WILL GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO BRING THE BLUE COATS!



AT DAWN, IN THE GARMENTS AND ROBE OF YOUNG STRONGBOW, STRAIGHT ARROW IS LEAD FROM HIS TEPEE...

STRONGBOW IS AFRAID! SEE HOW HE HIDES HIS FACE, THAT NONE MAY SEE HOW PALE WITH FRIGHT HE IS!



THERE ARE THE PITS, STRONGBOW! EACH IS COVERED, HIDING THE MANNER OF DEATH EACH HOLDS! IF YOU SUCCEED IN ESCAPING ALL THREE—YOU GO FREE! BUT THERE IS NO DANGER OF THAT!



WITH CONFIDENT SMIRKS ON THEIR FACES, FEATHER HAT AND HIS RENEGADE CREW TAKE THEIR PLACES...



I DON'T KNOW WHAT AWAITS ME, BUT I FEAR IT NOT!



THERE IS A ROAR THAT SHAKES THE GROUND! A GREEN-EYED DEMON HURTLING FORWARD!

THE LARGEST PANTHER I EVER SAW! ALMOST AS BIG AS A TIGER!



GLEAMING FANGS GLISTEN IN THE OPEN MOUTH! A HOT FETID BREATH BURNS THE COMANCHE CHIEFTAIN'S FACE!

ONE BITE OF THOSE JAWS AND HE COULD TAKE MY HEAD OFF...



TWISTING FREE, STRAIGHT ARROW
SNATCHES UP THE HIDE THAT COVERED
THE PIT'S MOUTH. TWISTING IT AROUND
A FOREARM, HE MEETS THE PANTHER
WITH COLD STEEL!

HIS FANGS CATCH IN THE
HIDE—WHILE THEY HOLD
HIM, MY KNIFE SINKS
INTO HIS HEART!



THE SECOND PIT IS COVERED
WITH LOGS AND BRUSHWOOD—



INSIDE IT STANDS A GAUNT, STARVED GRIZZLY
BEAR TOWERING HIGH ABOVE THE COMANCHE!

WHERE DID
FEATHER HAT
FIND
SUCH
ANIMALS?



THE GRIZZLY LUNGES FORWARD—

STRONGBOW IS TOO YOUNG
A WARRIOR TO HAVE
WITHSTOOD THESE TESTS!
ONLY I CAN HOPE TO KEEP
FEATHER HAT HERE WAITING
FOR MY DEATH—AND HOW
LONG CAN EVEN I KEEP
HIM HERE IS THE BIG
QUESTION...!



BACK AND FORTH MAN AND
BEAST REEL AND SWAY!
POWERFUL HAIRY ARMS
REACH OUT AND CLOSE!

MY RIBS ARE CRACK-
ING! HE IS TOO
STRONG FOR ME...!



ABOVE HIM GAPES A JAW
THAT DWARFS THE JAW OF
THE PANTHER! FOAM FLECKS
THE SNARLING LIPS!



BUT STRAIGHT ARROW IS ALSO STEVE ADAMS OF THE GOW CAMPS AND THE RODEO ARENA!

THIS LENGTH OF
RAWHIDE WILL
MAKE A GOOD
PIGGIN
STRING!



AS RODEO CONTESTANTS WHIP THEIR
PIGGIN STRINGS AROUND THE ANKLES
OF DOWNED CAVES, SO THE COMANCHE
CHIEF WHIPS THE LEATHER THONG AROUND
THOSE JAWS!

HIS GRIP
LOOSENS AS
HE STRUGGLES
TO FREE
HIS JAWS!



IN A MOMENT, STRAIGHT ARROW IS FREE TO MOVE!
HE HURLS HIMSELF AGAINST THE SHAGGY MONSTER,
AND HIS LONG HUNTING KNIFE DRINKS DEEP!

MY KNIFE HAS
FOUND HIS HEART!

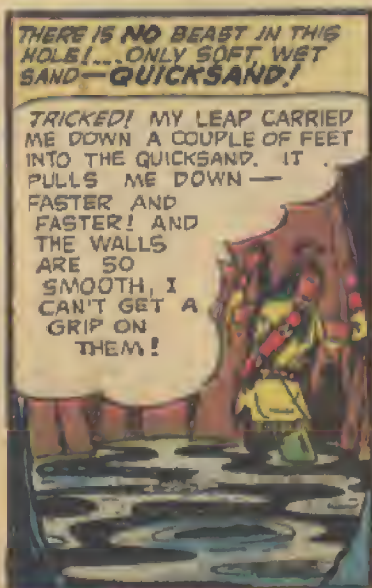


ONE MORE PIT REMAINS! TATTERED AND
TORN, HIS FLESH BLEEDING, STRAIGHT
ARROW HURLS HIMSELF DOWNWARD...



THERE IS NO BEAST IN THIS
HOLE!... ONLY SOFT WET
SAND—QUICKSAND!

TRICKED! MY LEAP CARRIED
ME DOWN A COUPLE OF FEET
INTO THE QUICKSAND. IT
PULLS ME DOWN—
FASTER AND
FASTER! AND
THE WALLS
ARE SO
SMOOTH, I
CAN'T GET A
GRIP ON
THEM!



AH! STRONGBOW IS GONE!
IT IS STRAIGHT ARROW
DOWN BELOW! ALL THE
BETTER! WE GO NOW TO
RAID THE RANCHES AND
THE SETTLEMENTS. MY
POWER IS SECURE AT
LAST!



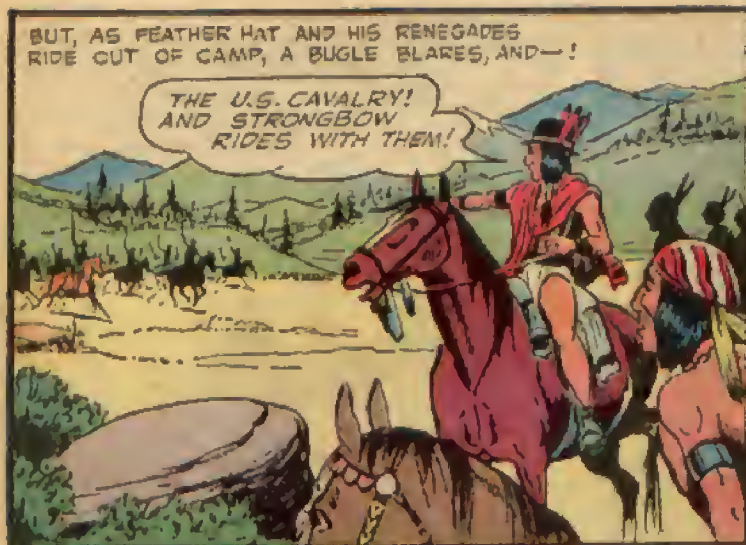
SLOWLY, BUT INEXORABLY THE
QUICKSAND DRAGS THE COM-
ANCHE CHIEF DOWN AND
DOWN. ALL HIS STRENGTH,
ALL HIS SKILL ARE NO
HELP TO HIM!

CAN'T DO A
THING...
GOING TO
DIE...
ALONE...
HELPLESS...



BUT, AS FEATHER HAT AND HIS RENEGADES
RIDE OUT OF CAMP, A BUGLE BLARES, AND—!

THE U.S. CAVALRY!
AND STRONGBOW
RIDES WITH THEM!

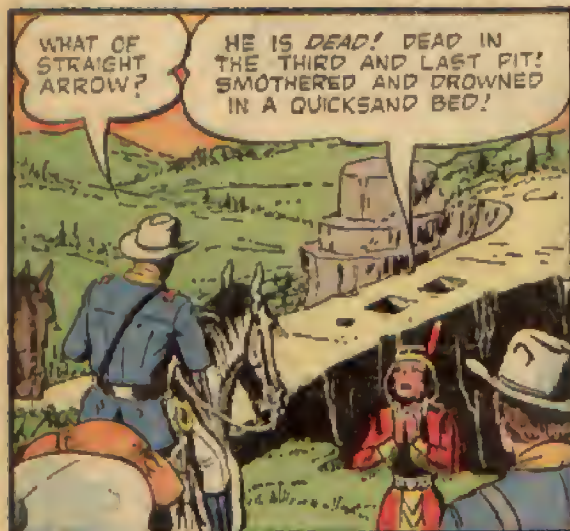


SABRES FLASH IN THE SUN AS
THEY DRIVE THE RENEGADES BACK...



WHAT OF
STRAIGHT
ARROW?

HE IS DEAD! DEAD IN
THE THIRD AND LAST PIT!
SMOTHERED AND DROWNED
IN A QUICKSAND BED!



BUT THE GREAT
COMANCHE WAR
CHIEF IS NOT
YET DEAD!
FOR AS THE
CLINGING
SANDS RISE
UP TO HIS
LEGS, HE
KNOTS HIS
TORN AND
RIPPED JACKET
TO HIS WARBOW.

I MAY
GET OUT
OF THIS!



HURLING HIS BOW HIGH, HE
HOLDS HIS BREATH AS IT
FALLS ACROSS THE MOUTH...

IF ONLY
MY BOW
DOES
NOT
BREAK!



HAND OVER HAND HE CLIMBS
UPWARD AND REACHES SAFETY.

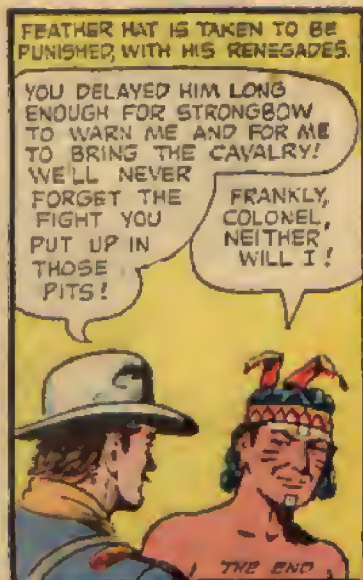
MADE
IT!



FEATHER HAT IS TAKEN TO BE
PUNISHED WITH HIS RENEGADES.

YOU DELAYED HIM LONG
ENOUGH FOR STRONGBOW
TO WARN ME AND FOR ME
TO BRING THE CAVALRY!
WE'LL NEVER
FORGET THE
FIGHT YOU
PUT UP IN
THOSE
PITS!

FRANKLY,
COLONEL,
NEITHER
WILL I!



THE END

HEY KIDS!

Be the first to get this terrific set of *Cowboys and Indians!*



AMAZING
Get acquainted offer!
GIANT COLLECTION
of 40 assorted pieces
all yours for only **98¢**
TREMENDOUS BARGAIN

MAIL COUPON TODAY

LUCKY PRODUCTS Dept. M17A
Cairo Place, N. Y.

Please send me the following. I am delighted my money will be cheerfully refunded.

☐ 40 western pieces, I enclose \$60

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZONE _____ STATE _____

Fun for all. Contains 40 plastic assorted western pieces. Cowboys, Indians, Horses all in action poses and a wonderful assortment of western themes. Attractive colors. A terrific collection full of action. Ideal for kids to play with indoors, outdoors and while traveling. Sure to make a hit with everyone.

ONLY
98¢

HEY KIDS! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
WE'RE GOING TO SEND IN OUR COUPONS FOR A TELEVISION BANK!



LIGHTS UP THE INSTANT YOU DROP COIN! Just insert a penny, nickel, dime or quarter into the slot on top. In a split second your spectacular Television Bank lights up—in a big, BIG way!

RIGHTEST ATTRACTION EVER!

Everyone will want to see this amazing new Television Bank. Your friends, relatives and neighbors can't resist peering in, eager to see this show!

TURN OF KNOB SHOWS NEXT EXCITING PICTURE! After you've looked your admiring fill at one picture, just turn center knob for next thrilling "show". Light goes out automatically as new picture appears. To light new picture, bank another coin. Six exciting pictures—a fight, a hilarious cartoon, a tense rodeo scene, a swell figure skater, a dramatic dance team and a circus clown with his trick dog!

PUTS YOU "IN THE MONEY" FAST

Your savings pile up **PENNY FAST** with this marvelous new Television Bank! Everyone wants to see all six pictures—your savings grow and grow by leaps and bounds! Rich-looking mahogany finish with four simulated dials and speaker grille. 4 1/2" x 4" and ruggedly constructed. Will give you years of fun and big savings!

SEAGEE CO., Dept. M16
2 Allen Street, New York 2, N. Y.

LOTS OF FUN AND MONEY! WITH THIS TELEVISION BANK

LIGHTS UP!
LIKE BIGGEST, COSTLIEST
TELEVISION SETS!

- SHOWS BRILLIANT PICTURES IN FULL COLOR!
- WITH EVERY TELEVISION FROM PICTURES AND ALL!
- THRILLS YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS FOR YEARS!
- AND... MAKE YOUR SAVINGS MOUNT UP FAST!
- ALL STEEL CONSTRUCTION

ONLY \$1.98

(COMPLETE WITH BATTERY AND BULB)

GUARANTEED TO DELIGHT YOU!
Bank comes complete with bulb, battery and strong box for storing and enjoying your wealth of savings.



BE THE FIRST IN YOUR CROWD TO HAVE THIS WONDERFUL NEW TELEVISION BANK! SEND NO MONEY! ORDER YOURS TODAY!

SEAGEE CO.,

Dept. M16

2 Allen Street,

New York 2, N. Y.

☐ Please rush me my TELEVISION BANK. I agree to pay postman \$1.98 plus few cents postage with understanding that if I am not delighted I may return bank in 1 day for full refund of purchase price.

Name _____ (Please Print Plainly)

Street _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

☐ I enclose \$1.98. You pay postage. Same money-back guarantee.



**YOU CAN BE
THE GHOST RIDER!**

**ONLY
\$1.00**

**AMAZE YOUR FRIENDS
WITH THIS WEIRD SCARF
THAT BECOMES A REAL
GHOST RIDER MASK
THAT GLOWS IN THE DARK!**

A jet-black scarf
...with the name of
THE GHOST RIDER bannered
on it...and a **SPOOKY**
white mask that becomes a
GHOST RIDER SKULL when
the mask is tied on...!



**MAIL
COUPON
AND
\$1.00**

COMPIX, Inc. Dept. BW8
10 Murray St. New York 7, N.Y.

Name

Address

City State

No C.O.D.s - Send check or money order

GHOST RIDER

THE

"CHARGE!"
CALL THE QUICK-
TEMPOED BUGLE
NOTES, AS THEY
SPLIT THE MORNING
CALM ASUNDER.
"CHARGE!"

AND THE MEN IN GRAY
LEAVE THEIR TRENCHES
AND MOVE GRIMLY
FORWARD INTO A VALLEY
OF DEATH...

A MILE AWAY, A UNION
SOLDIER PULLS A
LANYARD...

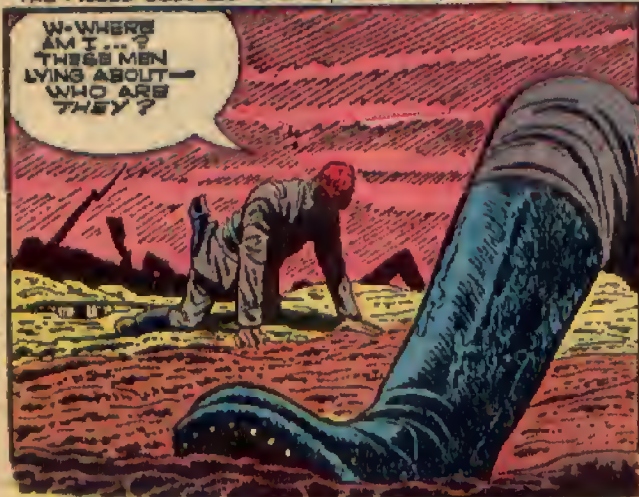
WHOOOOSH!
THE SHELL ARCS
THROUGH THE AIR—
IT'S NOSE BEGINS TO
TIP—IT SCREAMS
DOWNWARD—IT
SCORES A DIRECT HIT!
AND, THUS, AMIDST
AGONIZED SCREAMS,
BEGINS THE STRANGE
TALE OF THE GHOST
RIDER AND—

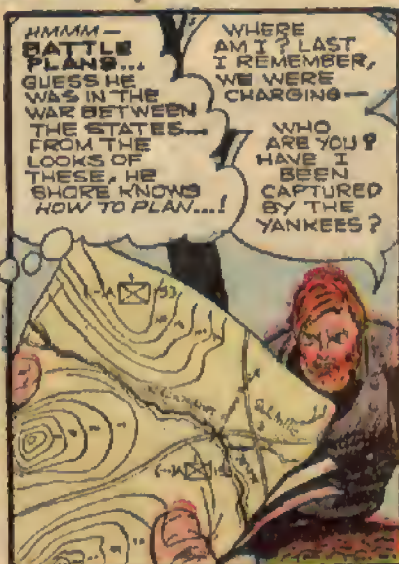
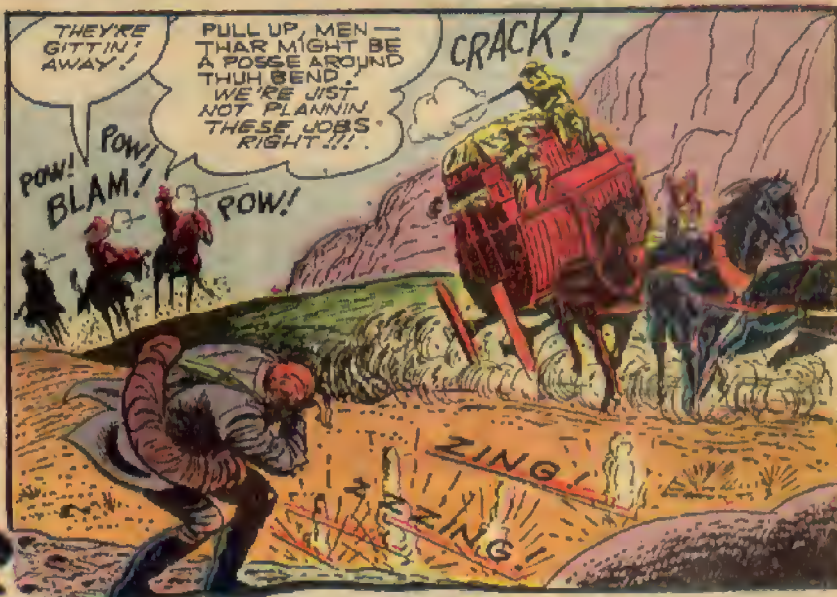
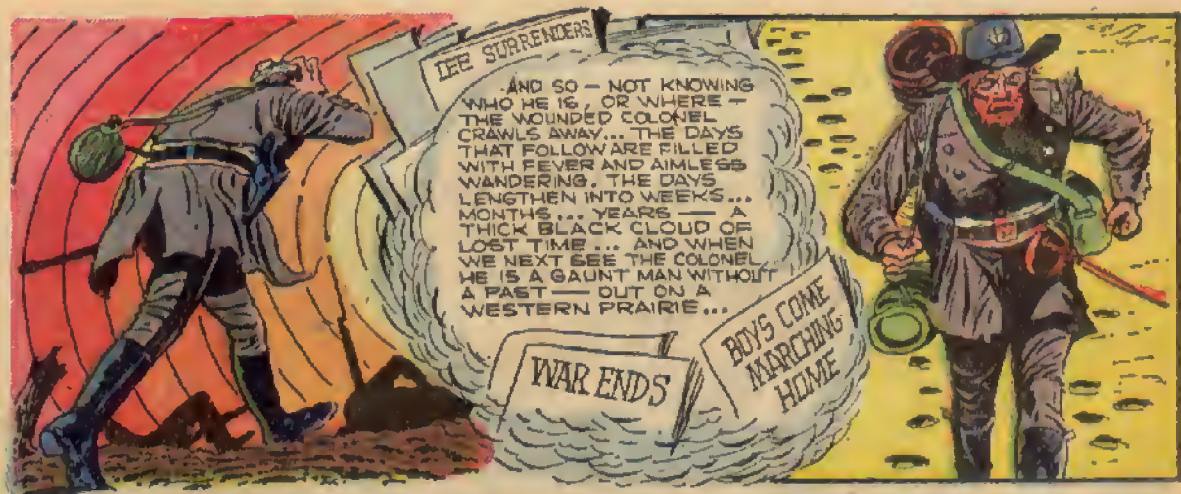
"THE
MAD
COMMANDER!"

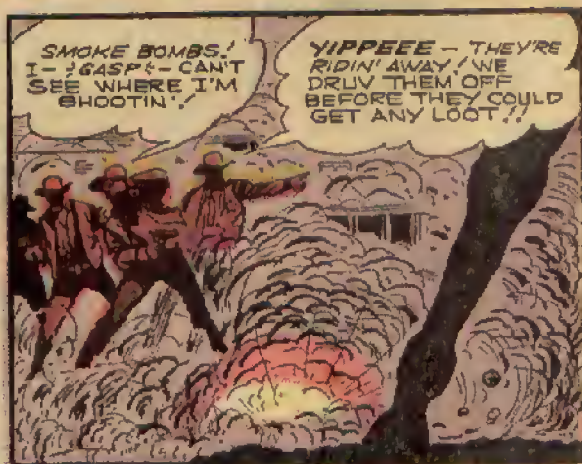
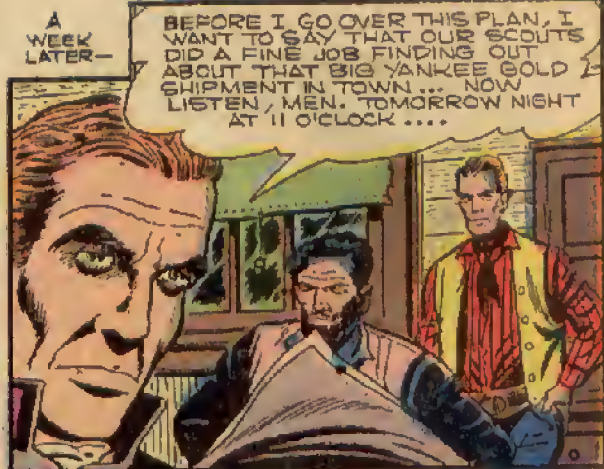


THE WINDS SLOWLY DRAG THE SMOKE AWAY...
THE PROUD COLONEL OPENS HIS EYES, GROANS—

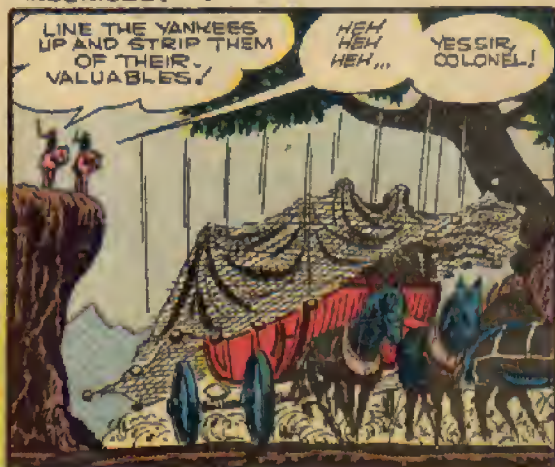
NIGHT FALLS, CASTING ITS SHROUD ON
THE DEAD AND THOSE WOUNDED IN BODY
—AND MIND...







THE COLONEL IS A TACTICAL GENIUS / HIS SECOND PLAN IS, IF ANYTHING, EVEN MORE INGENUOUS!



HOODWINKED BY THE OWLHOOTS, HE EVEN APPLIES HIS MILITARY GENIUS TO RUSTLING.



A TRAIN ROBBERY BASED ON A PLAN BY THE COLONEL GOES OFF WITHOUT A HITCH —



THE GANG GETS BOLDER AND BOLDER... THEIR MAD COMMANDER NEVER RESTS... HE LEADS EVERY RAID, AND SOON HIS PICTURE APPEARS ON REWARD POSTERS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.



SOME MONTHS LATER, A TREMBLING WOMAN STEPS OFF A WESTERN TRAIN —



I-I ALMOST HOPE I'M WRONG — BUT ALL THOSE CIRCULARS LOOK EXACTLY LIKE MY HUSBAND WHO WAS REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION THREE YEARS AGO...



WHUT'RE WE GONNA DO, BOSS?



LATER THAT NIGHT, A NOTE
IS THROWN THROUGH MRS.
ELLSWORTH'S HOTEL WINDOW—



ACHING TO RESOLVE HER
HORRIBLE UNCERTAINTY,
MRS. ELLSWORTH FOLLOWS
THE NOTE'S INSTRUCTIONS.
ALONE AND UNARMED, THE
BRAVE WOMAN RIDES OUT
TO DEAD BRAVE'S GULCH...



I GOT A MESSAGE
FROM YORE HUSBAND,
MA'AM. IT'S
RIGHT HERE
IN MY
HAND!

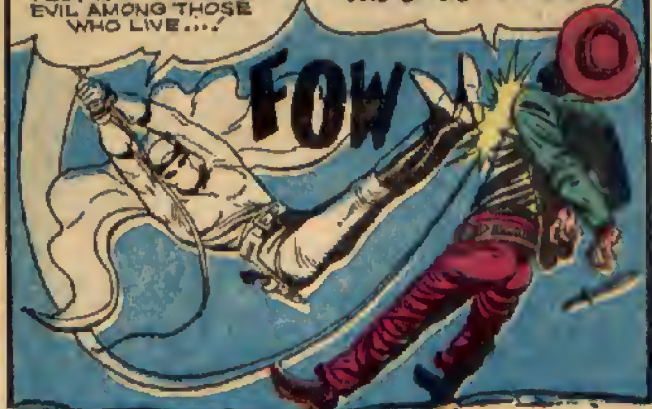


HER SCREAMS ARE NOT WASTED ON THE STILL DESERT
AIR—FOR DOWN FROM THE NIGHT SWINGS THE GHOST
RIDER!

TWO OF THE OWLHOOTS GET AWAY, BUT
THE GHOST RIDER NAILS THE THIRD!

FROM THE COLD
CLAMMY GRAVE I HAVE
FLOWN—TO COMBAT
EVIL AMONG THOSE
WHO LIVE...

OWWWW! HIT THUH
SADDLE, MEN—IT'S
THE GHOST RIDER!



NOT SO
FAST, I MUST
EARN WHY YOU
ASSAULT A
HELPLESS
WOMAN.

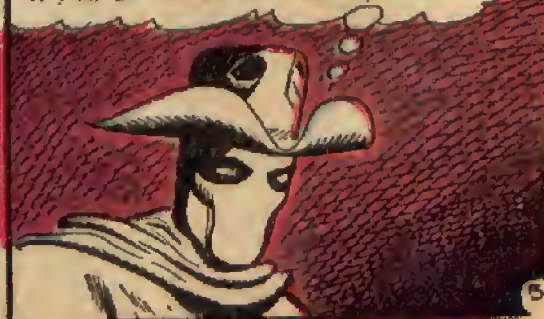


THE GHOST RIDER EFFECTS A QUICK CAPE
REVERSAL—FROM WHITE TO BLACK... AND
THE OWLHOOT'S EYES BULGE WITH TERROR,
AS HE IS GRIPPED BY SEEMINGLY
DISEMBODED HANDS—

AFTER THE SLOW FALTERING CONFESSION—

P-PLEASE, GHOST RIDER—P-DON'T DRAG
ME TO THE GRAVE! I'LL TELL YUH
WHATEVER YUH WANT TO KNOW...!

THIS IS THE VERY GANG I CAME TO THE
TERRITORY TO TRACK DOWN... BUT NOW
THAT THEY KNOW I AM ON THEIR TRAIL,
THE COLONEL'S LIFE IS IN DANGER, EVEN
AS I STAND HERE, THEY MUST BE ON
THEIR WAY TO THEIR MOUNTAIN HIDEOUT
TO KILL THE POOR COLONEL, AND THEN
DISPERSE... I HAVE TARRIED TOO LONG—
IT MAY BE TOO LATE TO SAVE HIM...!





AND SO BEGINS A GRIM RACE BETWEEN THE GHOST RIDER AND DEATH / SPURRED ON BY HIS MASTER, SPECTRE SPEEDS FASTER THAN THE WIND — ACROSS THE PLAINS — OVER CHASMS — UP STEEP SLOPES — THRU A TURBULENT RIVER — BUT TIME KEEPS TICKING RELENTLESSLY — AND THE OWLHOOTS HAVE A BIG HEAD-START / WILL THE GHOST RIDER GET TO THE MOUNTAIN HIDEOUT IN TIME TO PREVENT MURDER ... ?

HE MAKES IT!



BUT WHEN THE GHOST RIDER ENTERS —

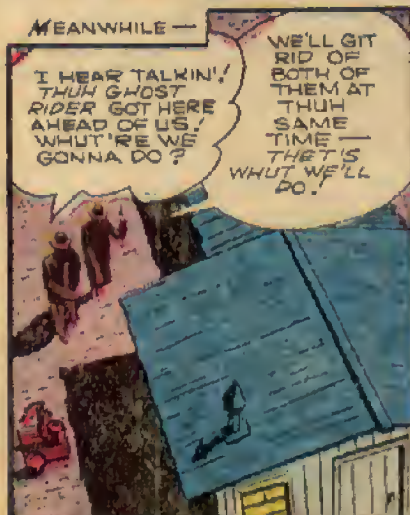


YOU ARE STEPPING CLOSER, SIR. YOU GIVE ME NO CHOICE — I MUST SHOOT YOU!

COLONEL ELLSWORTH...



MEANWHILE —



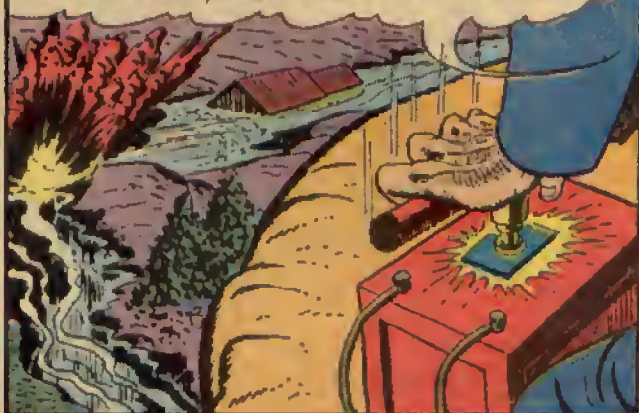
WE'LL GIT RID OF BOTH OF THEM AT THUH SAME TIME — THAT'S WHUT WE'LL DO!



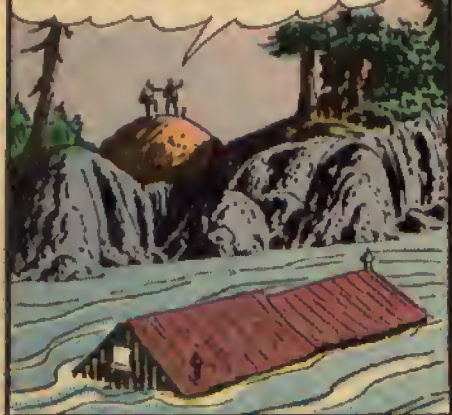
TEN MINUTES LATER, THE OWLHOOTS BEGIN PUTTING THEIR DIABOLIC PLAN INTO EFFECT —



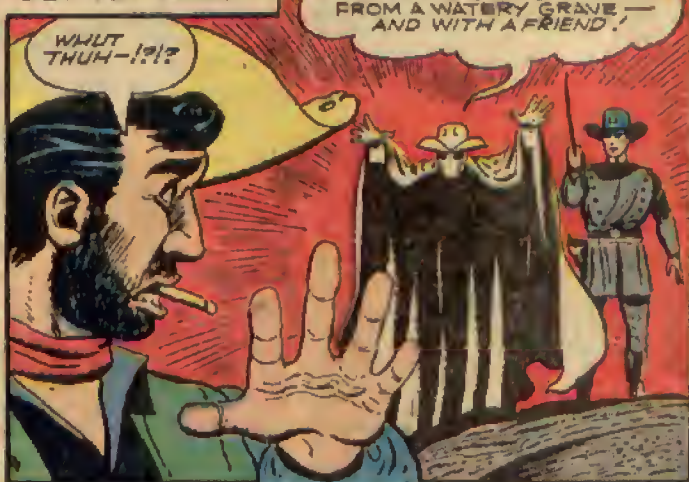
HEH-HEH-HEH ... THUH COLONEL COULDN'T'VE DONE BETTER HIMSELF. THUH BLAST IS CHANGIN' THUH COURSE OF THUH RIVER SO IT'LL FILL UP THUH HOLLOW THUH CABIN'S IN. IF THEY'RE NOT DAID ALREADY, THEY'RE SHORE TO DROWN.



HAW-HEE-HAW-HAW! WE DONE IT, MEN! WE KILLED THUH GHOST RIDER. NOBODY KIN STOP US NOW — WE'RE GONNA BE THUH KING OF THUH WEST...



BUT SUDDENLY—



THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES MAY BE OVER — BUT NOW I HAVE A PERSONAL WAR TO FINISH.



WATER—

THE GHOST RIDER CALLED ME BY NAME AND TOLD ME HOW YOU'D COME OUT WEST LOOKING FOR ME, DEAR — AND THAT RESTORED MY MEMORY COMPLETELY...

BUT I SAW THUH CABIN UNDER FIVE FOOT OF WATER! THET GHOST RIDER MUST BE A GHOST— NO OTHER WAY FER THEM TO HAVE GOTTEN OUT.

THE VILLAINS WERE TOO THOROUGH IN IMITATING THE COLONEL'S ELABORATE PLANS. THEY GAVE ME TIME TO EFFECT A QUICK CAPE REVERSAL, AND I AND THE COLONEL SLIPPED OUT OF THE SHACK UNSEEN IN THE DARKNESS BEFORE THEY ROLLED DOWN THE BOULDERS AND FLOODED THE HOLLOW...

FAREWELL, FRIENDS — I MUST RIDE ON IN EVERLASTING SEARCH OF EVIL.



END

The DURANGO KID

A LOT OF TIMES STEVE BRAND HAS TO PRETEND TO BE SOMEBODY ELSE IF HE WANTS TO STAY ALIVE - BUT IT'S SOMETHING NEW WHEN HE HAS TO PRETEND TO BE **HIMSELF!** IT'S A SLICK TRICK IF YOU CAN DO IT - BUT IT'S ALL PART OF THE "CODE OF THE DRYGULCHER!"

ART BY FRED GUARDINER



TRAIL LEADING INTO LIGHTNING FORK...

IT'S GOOD WE GOT SPIES IN TOWN. THUH CHIEF MARSHAL'S SENDIN' A DEPUTY IN TUH CLEAN US UP - HOMBRE BY THUH NAME O' STEVE BRAND. HE'S SUPPOSED TUH BE WEARIN' A BLACK VEST AN' A WHITE HAT.

WE'LL BE READY FER'IM, IDAHO JOE!



HYAR COMES SOMEBODY NOW - WHITE HAT AN' BLACK VEST. THET MUST BE STEVE BRAND. MAKE YORE SHOT A GOOD ONE, JEFF.

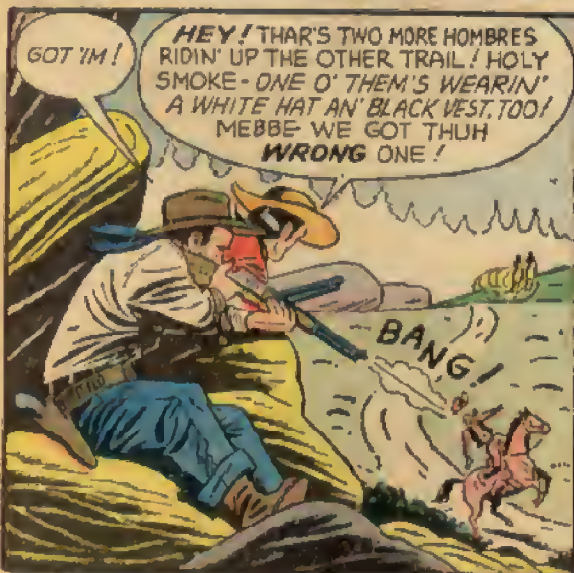
I NEVER MISS, BOSS!



GOT 'IM!

HEY! THAR'S TWO MORE HOMBRES RIDIN' UP THE OTHER TRAIL! HOLY SMOKE - ONE O' THEM'S WEARIN' A WHITE HAT AN' BLACK VEST, TOO! MEBBE WE GOT THUH **WRONG ONE!**

BANG!



DOWN BELOW...

THET HOMBRE - HE'S BEEN SHOT! DRYGULCHED!

QUICK - LET'S GET TO HIM!





DEAD / GOLLY-WONDER WHO HE WAS AND WHY THEY BUSHED 'IM!

HE'S DRESSED LIKE I AM - AND HE'S ABOUT THE SAME BUILD... I WONDER - ? THERE'S A LETTER IN HIS POCKET... MAYBE IT'LL GIVE US SOME CLUE...

! Dere Idaho Joe - This is Zeke O'Brien, who was in jail with me. He's a great gunolinger. You kin use him in yore gang. Big Mike



5537, STEVIE! THAR'S A COUPLE HOMBRES IN THUH BUSHES BEHIND YUH!

I HEAR THEM. IM PUTTING MY DEPUTY'S BADGE ON ZEKE O'BRIEN'S SHIRT. PLAY IT DUMB - LET ME DO THE TALKING!



LOOKS LIKE WE GOT THE RIGHT MAN, ALL RIGHT, BOSS - LOOKIT THAT BADGE ON HIS SHIRT. WE GOT STEVE BRAND.

YEAH, BUT WHO ARE THESE OTHER HOMBRES?

REACH, GENTS!



DON'T KNOW WHY YOU PLUGGED THIS DEPUTY, MISTER - BUT IT'S OKAY WITH ME. I'M ZEKE O'BRIEN AND I'M LOOKING FOR A GENT BY THE NAME OF IDAHO JOE. BIG MIKE SENT ME! THIS HERE'S MY RIDIN' PARTNER, DAKOTA PETE.

I'M IDAHO JOE - LET'S SEE THE LETTER!



GOOD OL' BIG MIKE! IF HE SAYS YUH'RE OKAY, IT'S GREAT WITH ME. I KIN USE YOU AN' YORE PARTNER, ZEKE. THAR'S EASY PICKIN' AROUND HYAR. HEY, WHUT YUH DOIN' WITH THET DEPUTY BADGE?



I'M TAKING THIS DEPUTY BADGE. NOBODY KNOWS I'M COMING - LET PEOPLE THINK I'M STEVE BRAND, DEPUTY MARSHAL! WITH ME PRETENDING TO BE STEVE BRAND, THINGS WILL BE EASY!

JUMPIN' GOPHERS! HAW-HAW-HAW! YUH'RE A SMART HOMBRE, ZEKE! AN' FROM NOW ON - YUH'RE STEVE BRAND - HAW-HAW-HAW!

NEXT DAY... IN A BACK ROOM OF THE RED MUG SALOON...



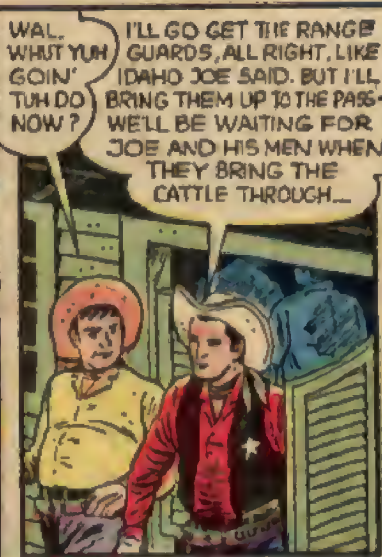
BIG MIKE SHORE SENT US A WINNER WHEN HE SENT HIS CELLMATE, ZEKE O'BRIEN. MEN, EVERYBODY IN TOWN THINKS ZEKE IS STEVE BRAND, DEPUTY MARSHAL. NOW'S OUR CHANCE TUH RUSTLE OFF THET BIG BAR-X HERD...

HYAR'S THUH PLAN-ZEKE WILL GO OUT TUH THUH RANGE GUARDS AN' GIT 'EM AWAY FROM THUH HERD. THEY'LL DO WHUT HE SAYS 'CAUSE THEY THINK HE'S DEPUTY MARSHAL. TELL 'EM YUH'RE CHASIN' AN OWLHOOT, ZEKE, AND YUH NEED 'EM FER A POSSE...



THEN, WHEN ALL'S CLEAR, WE JUMP THUH HERD AN' HEAD IT OVER THUH PASS INTUH MEXICO. GOT IT, ZEKE - I MEAN - HAW-HAW-HAW - "STEVE"!

I GET IT, BOSS... LET'S GO PARDNER!



WAL, WHAT YUH GOIN' TUH DO NOW?

I'LL GO GET THE RANGE GUARDS, ALL RIGHT, LIKE IDAHO JOE SAID. BUT I'LL BRING THEM UP TO THE PASS- WE'LL BE WAITING FOR JOE AND HIS MEN WHEN THEY BRING THE CATTLE THROUGH...



I GET IT- WE'LL CATCH 'EM RED-HANDED THET WAY- RIGHT?

RIGHT / YOU STICK AROUND HERE, MULEY- AND KEEP YOUR EYES AND EARS OPEN. KEEP UNDER COVER, SO LONG!



BUT, AS STEVE RIDES AWAY... A NEWCOMER SEES HIM...

WAL, I'LL BE - I WHUT'S HE DOIN' HYAR?



...AND ENTERS THE SALOON...

BIG MIKE! I THOUGHT YOU WUZ IN JAIL!

GOT OUT SOONER THAN I EXPECTED, IDAHO JOE. WHUT'S COOKIN'?

TOO BAD YUH MISSED YORE PAL, ZEKE O'BRIEN HE JEST RODE AWAY TUH FIX UP A JOB FER US. SOME JOKE - HE'S PURTENDIN' TUH BE STEVE BRAND...

PURTENDIN'! THET HOMBRE, WHUT JEST RODE AWAY FROM HYAR **IS** STEVE BRAND! I'D KNOW 'IM ANYWHERE - **HE** PUT ME IN JAIL!

WE BIN **TRICKED!**

HE'LL HAVE THOSE RANGE GUARDS WAITIN' FER US AT THUH PASS!

LET'S GIT OUTA HYAR FAST-HE'S GOT THUH GOODS ON US!

WAIT A MINUTE-WAIT A MINUTE! I SAID WE'D GIT THET HERD AN' WE'LL **GIT** IT! WE'LL JUMP THUH HERD LIKE WE SAID-BUT WE WONT HEAD IT THROUGH THUH PASS, CAUSE THET'S WHAR BRAND'LL BE WAITIN'...

INSTEAD, WE'LL HERD THEM CATTLE RIGHT BACK, HYAR-RIGHT, THROUGH THE TOWN-AN' GIT OVER THUH BORDER THET WAY!

WHUT-AN' HAVE EVERY MAN IN TOWN SHOOTIN' AT US 'NOT **ME!**

WRONG! THAR WON'T BE A MAN LEFT IN TOWN! THEY'LL ALL BE OUT CHASIN' A GENT NAMED **ZEKE O'BRIEN** WHO'S PURTENDIN' TUH BE STEVE BRAND-GIT IT?

WE GIT IT! SMART!

YIPE!! GOTTA GIT THUH STEVIE FAST!

QUIET! MEN-I JEST FOUND OUT THET NEW DEPUTYS A **FAKE!** HE AINT STEVE BRAND AT ALL! HE'S **ZEKE O'BRIEN** A DRYGULCHER-AN' HE'S OUT RIGHT NOW, RUSTLIN' CATTLE OVER THUH PASS!

LET'S GO GIT THET **FAKER!**

I BET HE KILLED THUH REAL STEVE BRAND!

FORM A POSSE, BOYS-AN' LET'S RIDE!

MULEY RIDES FOR THE RANGE - JUST TWO JUMPS AHEAD OF THE POSSE...



THAT HE IS - LUCKY HE WAS RIDIN' EASY, I'M SHORE GLAD I GOT TO 'IM AFORE THUH POSSE DID.

HEY, STEVE!

SO THEY'S IT / BIG MIKE - KNOWS WHO YUH ARE FER REAL! THEN IDAHO JOE RILED UP THUH WHOLE TOWN AG'IN YUH - THEY THINK YUH AIN'T WHO YUH ARE, I MEAN - YUH ARE WHO YUH AIN'T - AW, SHUCKS!

I GET IT! QUICK - LET'S CHANGE CLOTHES. TAKE MY HORSE!



HYAR THEY COME AFTER YUH, STEVE.

NOPE. THEY'RE AFTER **YOU** - YOU'RE WEARING MY CLOTHES AND RIDING MY HORSE. GIVEEM A GOOD RUN, MULEY - AND LEAD THEM RIGHT BACK TO TOWN...



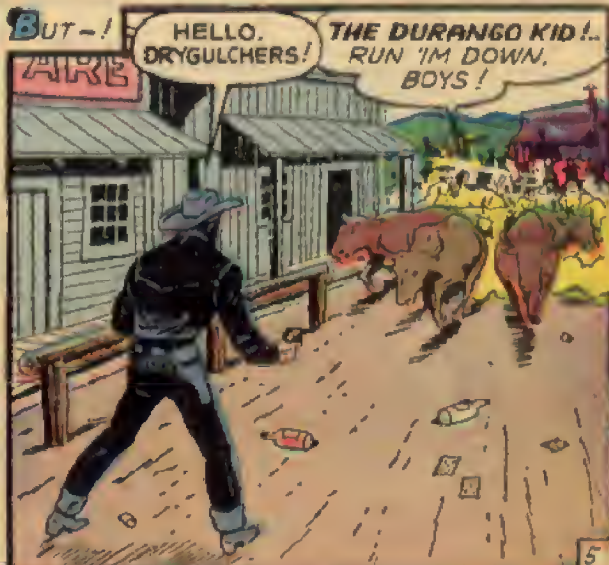
AND NOW - I'LL HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF THE REST OF IT ALONE - AS **THE DURANGO KID!**



MEANWHILE...

WE SHORE TOOK THEM RANGE GUARDS BY SURPRISE AND NOW - WELL RUN THUH CATTLE THROUGH THE TOWN!

WITH NOBODY TUH STOP US 'CEPT A BUNCH OF OLD MEN AN' WOMEN! EVERYBODY ELSE IS OUT CHASIN' STEVE BRAND - HAW - HAW!



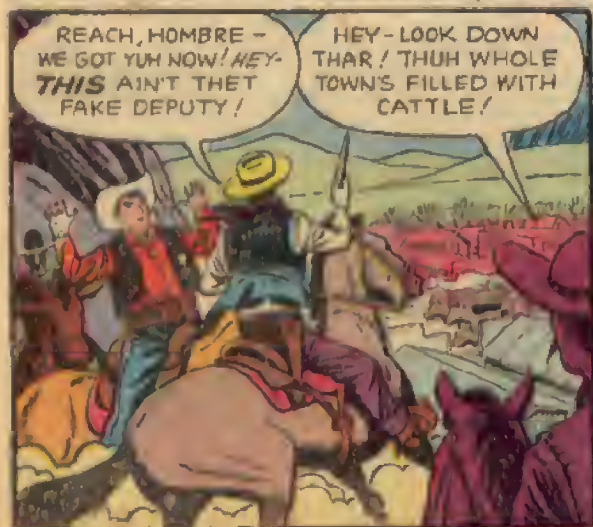
BUT -!
ARE

HELLO, DRYGULCHERS!

THE DURANGO KID!
RUN 'IM DOWN, BOYS!



AT THAT MOMENT, JUST OUTSIDE THE TOWN, ON A HILL...





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